

22 March 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Soviet Internal Affairs Branch, OCI

SUBJECT : Excerpts of Material from SB/S/CA Operations

SOURCE : Male Soviet Ukrainian visitor to West European country in February 1967

1. A former West Ukrainian village school teacher, receives a monthly pension of 63.50 rubels. Old age pensions are not sufficient for pensioners' needs. However, with the added income from private household plots, a person can live fairly well. A retired kolhoz worker receives 12 rubels monthly, but he usually has a plot, a cow, a pig and several chickens.

2. Introduction of the old age pension for kolhoz workers won a lot of sympathy for the government. Moreover, in addition, there appeared on the market more meat, fat, lard, and butter. There is also plenty of sugar. Sugar refinery workers receive extra bonuses in kind. The kolhoz workers, on the other hand, do not like being paid in cash, which is being done now on most collective farms. Workers preferred the old method of being paid in kind. It was easier to steal than it is now, and everyone has to steal in order to get along.

3. Life in the cities has improved, although a street cleaner, for example, must work a whole day to earn enough to buy less than 2 pounds of lard or four pounds of sugar. Wages and salaries are not commensurate with work performed. An example of current pay scales: A young M.D. - 90 rubels, skilled laborer - 80 to 120 rubels, locomotive engineer - up to 200 rubels, street cleaner - 40 rubels.

4. Medical aid is more than adequate. There are a lot of kolhoz workers in hospitals suffering from arthritis. Drugs are inexpensive and medicine for infants is free.

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5. Villages are rebuilt and modernized. Thatched roofs are now an exception.

6. Kolhoz chairmen are mainly local Ukrainians.

7. Russification is widespread in the Ukraine. The youth knows little about Ukraine's history, the Kievan state, Mazepa or Petlura. What they have heard has been distorted.

8. The source said that in his opinion, all Soviet republics are colonies. Administration in the West Ukraine breaks down as follows: Key posts are held by Russians who were brought to the Ukraine from the RSFSR; posts of secondary importance are held by Russians who were born in the Ukrainian and by some Ukrainians; the lowest positions in the Western Ukraine are held by Eastern Ukrainians, and only a negligible number of West Ukrainians hold any post at all. Ukrainian bureaucrats are worse (in their dealings with the local population) than even the Russians, and West Ukrainian bureaucrats are "pigs". There was a meeting of Ukrainian writers and journalists in Lvov in the spring of 1966 at which time they discussed the poor state of the Ukrainian language, particular in radio and TV programs. Following the meeting, the language situation improved somewhat and there now are more Ukrainian programs, but there are still too many Russians in key positions in these fields. Young intellectuals are looking for a change and the nationalist ferment among them is quite strong, although many of them are still mainly interested in their own careers and their own personal welfare. Fnu Chypshyn, a lecturer at the University of Lvov, who was tortured and banished from West Ukraine in 1945 because he slapped an MVD man in the face when the latter hit him, was recently returned and rehabilitated. Insubordination in the Ukraine, in the source's opinion, is still crushed with an iron hand and people disappear without a trace.

9. Ukrainians in general are happy about the Soviet-Chinese rift, but there is no known pro-Peking faction. There is not much expected from the rift, and there is even fear in some quarters, lest the Chinese "come here", but the people are happy that the "almighty Russians" are having difficulties.

10. The black market is very much in existence. It is possible to buy everything from fabrics to gold rubels. Party members are often found among the racketeers. Those caught are dealt with severely.

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11. An underground Catholic Church does exist. It is led by priests who refused to convert to Orthodoxy. They hold services in private homes. One of the priests in Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast gave the source some money to buy prayer books in the West.

12. Jews, particularly in places where they live in a compact mass, as for instance, in Chernovtsi, are disliked by the local population, and the source felt the Jews had a disdainful attitude to everything Ukrainian.

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